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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": implementation of strategic objectives and action in critical areas of concern and further actions and initiatives: priority theme: women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development

Ministerial round table on fostering gender-responsive data design, collection and analysis, and building the knowledge base

Chair's summary

1. At its 3rd meeting, on 14 March 2016, the Commission on the Status of Women held a ministerial round table on the topic "Fostering gender-responsive data design, collection and analysis, and building the knowledge base", under the overall theme "Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development". The participants in the round table exchanged experiences, lessons learned and good practices in relation to the topic, with an emphasis on gender-responsive implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

2. The Parliamentary State Secretary to the Federal Minister for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth of Germany, Elke Ferner, chaired the round table, and the National Statistician and Civil Registrar General of the Philippines, Lisa Grace Bersales, served as moderator. The meeting opened with brief introductions by the Chair and the moderator. Ministers and high-level officials from 15 Member States participated. The Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director for Policy and Programme of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Yannick Glemarec, made closing comments.

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Forging partnerships within and among countries and with international development partners

3. All participants confirmed that gender-responsive data were one of the core elements of the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. Thus, participants noted the particularly urgent need to invest in the human, financial and technical capacities of line ministries and national statistical systems to produce gender statistics. Forging partnerships between women's machineries and national statistical offices was considered key to fostering gender-responsive data design, collection and analysis and building the knowledge base. A number of participants expressed appreciation for the technical and financial support provided to national statistical systems by United Nations agencies and other development partners, and many more called for greater support for Governments in that regard.

4. Participants emphasized that the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals would require ownership at the country level as well as strengthened partnership and investment. Some participants also recognized the need to ensure the full and effective participation of civil society organizations in such efforts.

Innovating in data collection and presentation

5. Participants acknowledged the need to go beyond statistical conventions and develop innovative ways to measure gender equality. Participants highlighted a number of existing initiatives, including: (a) greater involvement of women's groups in data collection processes to increase ownership; (b) initiatives to involve local governments in the production and use of gender statistics; and (c) greater collaboration with the private sector to ensure access to new sources of data, including big data.

Building capacities within the national statistical system

6. Participants highlighted specific areas where support for capacity-building was needed, including: (a) producing data in specific areas such as unpaid care and domestic work, violence against women, women in poverty, women and energy, and quality of reproductive health services; (b) developing a comprehensive framework for the production of data with which to monitor the Sustainable Development Goals; (c) building capacity for data analysis, particularly capacity of small island developing States; and (d) enhancing access to modern information technologies and making data accessible to stakeholders.

Coordination to ensure the provision of gender-responsive data

7. Many participants emphasized the importance of strengthening coordination systems to support the research mechanisms already in place. Participants highlighted the need to require all authorities, particularly line ministries and national statistical offices, to work systematically towards gender equality.

8. Participants highlighted the fact that coordination mechanisms aimed at enhancing collaboration and promoting the provision of gender-responsive data included the conduct of regular meetings and seminars for data producers and users at all levels and the establishment of national groups to assess the increased requirements for data for the monitoring of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Making statistical information from various sources available and accessible to all users

9. A number of national initiatives undertaken by national statistical offices and line ministries to produce gender-responsive data were cited by participants, including nationwide surveys related to gender equality, and central registries of births and deaths. A number of participants also recognized the importance of tapping into new data sources, such as big data, crowdsourcing and domestic violence hotlines. In that respect, the importance of monitoring and quality control was stressed.

10. Participants also highlighted the need for greater data-sharing and use of dissemination tools, while also ensuring confidentiality and privacy, particularly regarding violence against women.

Producing user-friendly gender-responsive data and analysis

11. Participants recognized that progress had been achieved in the production and analysis of data using censuses and surveys. Participants also noted that, for gender-responsive data to be useful, the data needed to be communicated to users accurately, in a user-friendly manner and free of charge.

12. Some participants noted the need to strengthen the capacities of countries to analyse existing data and to conduct needed research on important areas such as gender pay gaps, the impacts of unpaid care and domestic work on women, engagement in the informal sector, and violence against women.

Ensuring an enabling legal, policy and financial environment

13. Participants highlighted the need to develop national strategies and mechanisms for creating an enabling environment for gender-responsive data design, collection and analysis and building the knowledge base, through: (a) legal provisions mandating national statistical systems to collect data; (b) national strategies for the development of statistics; (c) the formulation of gender-responsive statistical plans by all key government agencies; and (d) the development of comprehensive frameworks and monitoring systems to fully integrate gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls into national planning.

14. While all participants confirmed that carrying out the appropriate disaggregation of data was essential as countries embarked on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, some acknowledged the often prohibitive cost of doing so. To address those needs and gaps, ownership, partnership and strong leadership were required within and among countries as well as in the international community.